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## HARRIS COUNTY, 1822-1845

ADELE B. LOOSCAN

## II. HARRIS COUNTY IN THE REVOLUTION

The large share of the citizens of Harris County in winning the independence of Texas from Mexico has never been announced with a blare of trumpets; the facts have simply been recorded in history.

That the citizens of Harris County were important factors in the early revolutionary period, will be shown in the following pages.

In the summer of 1829 about thirty citizens met at Harrisburg and organized for an expedition against a predatory band of Indians. They marched to Groce's, a place of rendezvous, where, uniting with others, about eighty in number, under Colonel John Nail, they marched to within twelve miles of the Waco village, encountered and defeated about two hundred Indians, and returned home with the loss of only two men.

When the first trouble with Mexicans at Anahuac occurred in 1832, many of the citizens of Harrisburg marched under Colonel Frank Johnson to the aid of the Texans at Anahuac.

From the beginning of American colonization, in this part of Texas, there had been considerable trade between the settlement on the Trinity, called by the Mexicans, Anahuac, and Harrisburg, the chief trading point between the mouth of the Trinity, and Bell's landing on the Brazos River; it was natural that any interference with this right should be strongly resented and resisted by the citizens of both towns, and the occasion which arose early in 1835 proved they were determined to stand together in defense of that right.

In 1835 Anahuac was in the heyday of its prosperity. There had been no attempt to collect custom dues since 1832, but a change of policy on the part of the Mexican government caused the re-establishment of a collector of customs, and in the latter part of January, 1835, a body of Mexican soldiers under command of Antonio Tenorio was sent to enforce the collection of duties on goods received at the port, which was then known as the port of Galveston.

Opposition to the contemplated infringement of the license which the colonists had enjoyed since 1832 was not slow in manifesting itself among the citizens, especially as they claimed that such dues were not collected at any other point in Texas. Captain Tenorio soon found himself surrounded with difficulties. In response to his letter of complaint to the government, he, on May 1, received a reinforcement of men, together with guns and flints, and money for the payment of his garrison, several of whom had already deserted to the Texas colonists.

In the meantime, lumber which had been sent for the purpose of rebuilding Fort Davis had been burned on the night of the 3d, and upon his reporting this outrage to the commissary of police at Anahuac, as the work of one Mores, no steps were taken to arrest the supposed offender. In fact, the citizens of Anahuac had so little relish for the establishment of a Mexican garrison among them that they resolutely determined to resist the exactions of its officers in every particular. To carry out this determination in the most forcible manner, they held a public meeting on May 4, of which I submit the following report, clipped from the *Texas Republican* of August 8, 1835, published at Columbia.

ANAHUAC, May 4, 1835.

A respectable number of citizens of this jurisdiction convened this day at the house of Benjamin Freeman of this place, according to previous notice. Gen. William Hardin was called to the chair, and I. N. Moreland was appointed Secretary. The object of the meeting was explained by Mr. A. Briscoe who presented the following resolutions and preamble, which, after a short discussion, were unanimously adopted.

Whereas, There is no custom house organized in any part of the colonies of Texas, nor any duty upon importation collected, and whereas, duties have been collected here for the last three months, this being the poorest part of a poor country, there being an insufficiency of money to pay the duties on what importations have been made, trade every day decreasing, therefore,

Resolved, That the proceedings of the individuals claiming to be custom house officers at this place have neither been reasonable, just, or regularly legal, it being unreasonable and unjust to demand the whole duties of one small settlement, while the whole coast, and border besides, is free and open; and illegal, because they have never presented themselves or their credentials to the civil authorities for their recognition, nor have the said authori-

ties been notified by the Government that any such officers have been appointed for this port.

Resolved, That the country, as we believe, is not able to pay the regular duties according to the regulations of the general tariff; therefore, it is resolved that we send to the political chief of this department, by him to be forwarded to the Governor of the State, the foregoing memorial expressive of our opinion with regard to the situation of this part of the country, and its inability to comply with the tariff law, and praying him to intercede with the General Government for an exemption for these colonies for five or six years, from the restrictions upon commerce imposed by the general tariff.

Resolved, That until the object of the preceding resolution can be carried into effect, no duties should be collected in this port unless the collection is also equally enforced throughout the province; nor until then will we pay any duties on importations into this port.

Resolved, That these proceedings be signed by the chairman and secretary, and that copies be forwarded to the Judge of the First Instance, to the editor of the *Texas Republican*, to Don Jose Gonzales and to the political chief of the department, to be sent by him to the Governor.

I. N. MORELAND.

Attached to these resolutions and also published, was an address to the Governor of the Free State of Coahuila and Texas, and a letter from Andrew Briscoe, dated July 11, to the editor of the *Texas Republican*, further justifying the action thus taken by him and his fellow citizens. The people were divided in their view as to the advisability of resistance, and the Columbia settlement held a meeting expressing strong disapproval of the course pursued at the Anahuac meeting.

Moreover, immediately after the meeting at Anahuac, General Hardin, the chairman, left for the United States before copies could be made out and signed by him, so that any regular proceedings were blocked by this action of the chairman. These circumstances and the sharp criticism of the Columbia meeting, are the subject matter of the letter of Andrew Briscoe.

The lines were now beginning to be firmly drawn between the opposition and the non-resisting or peace party, and for good and sufficient reasons the Anahuac people, with Mr. Briscoe at their head, having made their resolutions to resist the unlawful collection of duties, stood firmly by them.

Of Andrew Briscoe's willingness to prove his stern purpose by his acts, he gave ample proof a few weeks afterward, when he took an important step toward precipitating the long threatening revolution of Texas against Mexico. The story of his adventure, the first act of resistance to Mexican authority in 1835, connects the towns of Anahuac and Harrisburg very closely in history.

From his home in Harrisburg, on June 10, DeWitt Clinton Harris, a youth about eighteen years old, went by sail boat to Anahuac to purchase goods of Mr. Briscoe. The collector refused to allow the goods bought by him to be removed without a permit from the custom house, for which, of course, a certain sum of money was demanded. With this demand, both Briscoe and Harris refused to comply. A guard was accordingly placed around the store on the night of the 12th, to prevent any attempt at moving the goods. While matters were in this state, a young man came into the store and asked for a goods box to put ballast in, which was given him, and he started to the beach rolling a wheelbarrow containing the box, which was filled with brickbats. Harris remarked to Briscoe that they could now ascertain whether the Mexicans would really prevent him from moving his goods. In a few minutes they heard the young man with the wheelbarrow calling for Mr. Smith, the interpreter; they both went out and found he had been stopped by the guard. When the interpreter came up and informed the Mexican guard of the contents of the box, they seemed satisfied, and allowed it to be taken to the beach and put on board the boat. But when Briscoe and Harris were about returning to the store, they were set upon by ten or twelve Mexican soldiers and ordered to stand, while a young man named William Smith, who was coming down the hill towards them, was shot down.

They were made prisoners and confined in the calaboose. Harris, being a mere youth, and not an arch offender, was released the next day and returned to Harrisburg, but without his goods. He immediately sent a report of the adventure to the authorities at San Felipe. On the 21st of June a public meeting was held there, and resolutions passed authorizing William B. Travis to collect a company of volunteers and eject Tenorio from the garrison at Anahuac. Friendship, as well as patriotism required Travis to act in this manner, for, as he said, "Some of his friends who

were principal citizens of the place were suffering under the despotic rule of the military." This expedition started from Harrisburg, where the sloop Ohio belonging to the Harrises, was chartered; a six-pound cannon, mounted on a pair of saw mill truck wheels, constituted its armament.

There were about twenty-five volunteers, who were probably armed. Some of them, who at first signed an agreement at San Felipe to march against the garrison reconsidered, and failed to go, but other recruits were taken up at Lynchburg and Spillman's Island. At Clopper's Point, now known as Morgan's Point, an election of officers was held, which made Travis, captain; Ritson Morris, first lieutenant, and John W. Moore was appointed orderly sergeant. Arriving within about half a mile of Anahuac, the boat grounded, a shot was fired by way of warning, and the cannon was then placed in a small boat, and they rowed ashore. The Mexicans fled to the woods, and the fort was found deserted. An interview was had with Tenorio, who agreed to sign articles of capitulation, the next morning. So, on June 30 the following terms were agreed upon: The Mexican officers pledged themselves not to take up arms against Texas, and were to be allowed to proceed to San Antonio. Twelve of the soldiers were granted the privilege of retaining their arms as a protection against Indians on the march. All the arms, sixty-four stands of muskets and bayonets, ammunition, etc., were turned over to the Texans. Mr. Briscoe was released and the Mexican custom house in Texas done away with forever.

The Mexicans and Texans returned to Harrisburg, where they arrived in time to attend a Fourth of July barbecue and ball. Captain Tenorio is said to have been a fine looking man of varied accomplishments.

He not only participated in the amusements of the barbecue, but attended the ball, where he waltzed and talked French with the handsome Mrs. Kokernot, who was a fine linguist. On the whole he was treated with civility, and some people who were there thought he acted as if he was the hero of the occasion. The truth is, he was probably only too glad to be relieved from his duties at Anahuac, and hailed his deliverers with no ill feeling. But, the action of disarming the fort was condemned by all but the most outspoken of the war party, and Travis, on his return to San

Felipe, had to bear the reaction of opinion. In a letter to the public on the subject, he was reduced to the necessity of justifying his course. I quote the closing lines of a letter which bears favorable comparison for heroic sentiment with any that he sent out from the Alamo:

I discharged what I conceived to be my duty to my country to the best of my ability. Time alone will show whether the step was correct or not. And time will show, that when this country is in danger that I will show myself as patriotic and ready to serve her as those who, to save themselves, have disavowed the act, and denounced me to the usurping military. [San Felipe, Sep. 1, 1835.]

The following letter from Travis to Briscoe, written at about the same time, gives a fair account of the state of public feeling:

SAN FELIPE, TEXAS, Aug 31, 1835.

My dear Sir:—

I have not written to you before because I was ashamed to tell what was going on. It is different now. Although the Mexican or Tory party made a tremendous effort to put us down, principle has triumphed over prejudice, passion, cowardice and knavery. All their measures have recoiled upon them, and they are routed horse and foot. The extent of their glory was to denounce us to the military at San Antonio and Matamoras, and demand our arrest. An order was accordingly issued to Ugartachea, and repeated by Cos, to arrest seven of us and send us to Bexar to be tried by martial law. This was too much for the people to bear. When they were called on by an usurping political chief to carry these orders into execution, the sacrifice was too great. Their wrath was turned against the Tories and Spanish-Americans, who now dare not to hold up their heads. The people call now loudly for a convention in which their voices shall be heard. They have become almost completely united. And now let Tories, submission men and Spanish invaders look out.

There is to be a great meeting here on the 12th of September on the subject of a convention. The Tories are dying a violent death, and their last expiring struggle will be made on that day. Therefore, I invite you to attend and hope you will do so. But I wish to see them overwhelmed. I have seen your publication. It does you credit. You have shown yourself the real white man and uncompromising patriot. Stick to the text and Texas is saved.

I have at this moment finished conversing with a Mexican just from San Antonio. He says marching orders have been given to the troops. They are to be here by the 12th or 13th of Septem-

ber to garrison this town, Tenoxtitlan, and Nacogdoches, with 200 men each; and it is concerted that 200 men shall arrive by water at Anahuac at about the same time to garrison that place. They have sworn vengeance against all engaged in the late expedition, and in that of 1832 at Anahuac and Velasco.

They calculate to take up these men with the aid of other Americans, by which time they will gradually bring in troops enough to overrun the people and keep them in vile submission. They cannot do it.

We will not submit to be garrisoned here. I hope you will not there. We shall give them hell if they come here. Keep a bright lookout to sea. Allow no pilots in the bay to assist them, and they cannot land before you have time to prepare for them. Secure all the powder and lead.

Remember that war is not to be waged without means. Let us be men and Texas will triumph. I know you can be relied on; therefore, I exhort you to be active in preparing the minds of men for the scenes that are to be enacted.

News from New Orleans that we will be liberally aided with men, money, and arms, has arrived. Already we have five pieces of cannon, 100 kegs of powder, and lead and shot to correspond, landed in Matagorda and sent from New Orleans.

Come over if you can on the 12th. My respects to Wilcox and others. Please write soon.

Your Friend,

W. B. TRAVIS.

As is well known Travis was one of the leaders of the war party, and the authorities at Columbia were urged by General Cos to secure "the apprehension of that ungrateful and bad citizen, W. B. Travis."

He, who at that time was blamed by some of his own people for precipitating the revolution, and called by his enemies, "an ungrateful and bad citizen," has earned a fame which shall give him through all the ages the noble title of hero, the birthright of such a determined nature.

The first act of the revolution of 1835, in which Andrew Briscoe and DeWitt Clinton Harris took the initial steps, and were ably seconded by Travis and others, was of the same character, and marked by the same determination, as the closing act of Wm. B. Travis, at the Alamo. They were the acts of men, who were determined to live in the enjoyment of constitutional rights, or die in defense of them.



At Anahuac, the Mexicans were few in numbers, badly scared, and yielded without firing a gun.

Another letter from Travis at the same time gives important evidence as to the state of public opinion two months after the attack on Anahuac.<sup>1</sup>

SAN FELIPE, August 31st, 1835.

Dear Sir:—

Huzza for Texas! Huzza for Liberty, and the rights of man!

My friend, when I returned from your place, I found the tories and cowards, making a strong effort, and for a time they were but too successful. I was, therefore, disgusted and wrote you but little, as I had nothing to communicate but what I was ashamed of, as a free man and a friend of my country. It is different now, thank God! principle has triumphed over prejudice, passion, cowardice and slavery. Texas is herself again. The people in the whole upper country are unanimous for a convention in which the voice of the people will be freely expressed. Every part of the country has pronounced against the dictation and humiliating course of the tories and friends of the Spaniards. The pitiful faction which has dominated here has expired, and those who supported the doctrine of abject submission to the military, have sunk too low, ever to rise again.

Principle was gradually working out this glorious end, and preparing the way for the march of freedom when the order came for my being arrested and given up to the military to be shot, for engaging in the expedition to Anahuac, etc. That was too much for the people to bear; it was too great a sacrifice for them to make, and they unanimously exclaimed against this order and its supporters. The devil has shown his cloven foot, and his lies will be believed no longer.

<sup>1</sup>Travis to J. W. Moore, in *The Morning Star*, Houston, Saturday, March 14, 1840. The editor, D. H. Fitch, says: "The following letter from the pen of the immortal Travis will be read with peculiar interest. Every line that has been penned by that noblest of Texian patriots will ever command the admiration and respect of Texians. Who can read these lines and not feel his bosom glow with the fire of liberty that animated their illustrious author? This letter was addressed to Major J. W. Moore, and the original is now in his possession; it will some day become a valuable autograph. Colonel Moore was the first who raised the one-starred banner among the brave 'Harrisburgers,' to whom Travis alludes, and has on many occasions by his bravery and devotion to the cause of freedom, proved himself worthy of his noble correspondent.

"The complimentary remarks of Travis, relative to the citizens of 'Harrisburg county,' would apply as well, even now, as at any previous period, for there has never been a time when the citizens of this district were not the foremost to rush to the defense of the frontiers, or to contribute even to the last dollar, when the country required a pecuniary sacrifice."

A tremendous reaction has taken place, and the tories are almost as bad off as they were in 1832. "Heaven's hangman will lash the rascals round the world."

The word now is, a convention of all Texas, to declare our sentiments, and to prepare for defense, if necessary.

The Harrisburgers want no stimulus to patriotism. They have always been the foremost in favor of liberal republican principle.

They have always been on one side; the right side. They have never barked up the wrong tree, and I hope, never will. God grant that all Texas may stand as firm as Harrisburg in the "hour that will try men's souls."

I feel the triumph we have gained, and I glory in it. Let Texas stand firm and be true to herself, and we have nothing to fear. We have many rumors afloat here. There is no doubt of one thing, they mean to flood the country with troops, and garrison the towns.

San Felipe, Nacogdoches, and all the ports, are to be garrisoned in a month or two. They are determined to punish those engaged in the expedition of Anahuac in 1832, and in 1835 and that of Velasco, in 1832. If we submit to these things, we are slaves and deserve not the name of freeman.

We are to have a great meeting here on the 12th of September to vote for and against a Convention. The citizens of the whole jurisdiction are invited to attend. I hope you will come and bring all the Harrisburg boys you can. Those who cannot come, please get them to sign a paper similar to the one signed at Columbia, expressing their wishes for a Convention.

Tender my best respects to all the boys—tell them never fear, fortune favors the brave.

Your friend,

W. BARRET TRAVIS.

Many of the best people of Austin's colony were strongly opposed to the policy of separation from Mexico, and this attitude on their part in the beginning served to multiply the difficulties which beset the course of those who advocated independence at any cost. The following letter from the Hon. Wm. Hardin to Don Antonio Gil Hernandez, dated Liberty, July 27th, 1835, will illustrate the attitude of the peace party:

Dear Sir:

Some short time since I wrote you a few lines in which I stated that I would be down soon, and I expected to have come down before this time, but my health will not yet admit of my riding. I have understood that you wish to leave for the interior. I wish

you to make yourself easy and remain in Anahuac as I am determined to give you any assistance that you may need. If there should arrive any vessel, I wish you to inform me of it immediately, and I will furnish you with as many men as may be necessary for the collection of the duties. I am determined that no vessel shall enter without paying the duties. I understand that goods are landing at the Neches. If you wish to go there I will furnish you with men sufficient to go with you. If I had been at home and in health you would not have been without troops at Anahuac.

Very respectfully, Your Friend, Etc.

WM. HARDIN.

We certify the above to be a true copy from the original in the hands of Don Anto Gil Hernandez, Anahuac, Sept. 25, 1835.

Joseph Bryan  
Geo. W. Miles

Adam Smith  
A. Briscoe.<sup>2</sup>

Whether this certified copy was procured to prove Hardin's loyalty to the cause of Mexico, or his disapproval of the independence movement in Texas is not known. While it seems to prove both, at that time there were many others occupying the same political position; who afterwards gladly joined their fortunes to those of the independence party, and it is presumed that he was of this number, as one of the counties of Texas was later named in his honor.

The sentiments expressed in the foregoing letters furnish an excellent index to the general feeling of the Texans up to this time; they show how widely the views of good citizens were separated as to their proper course. But, events immediately following the affair at Anahuac, among them orders from Mexico for the arrest of Zavala, Travis and other leading citizens, drew all factions of Texans together, precipitated the organization of committees, who were authorized to adopt resolutions proclaiming the lawful rights of the people under the Constitution of 1824, and hastened the formation of military companies for the defence of those rights. When it became plain that Texans must prepare to defend their homes by force of arms, it was natural that the two chief towns of Harris County should occupy the front rank in the organization of volunteer companies, but, it is doubtful whether

<sup>2</sup>This letter is from the Andrew Briscoe papers, in the writer's possession.

any official records of the membership of these companies have been preserved. Volunteers were soon merged into the regular army, and their significance as *first volunteers* was lost sight of in the greater importance of the large military body acting under duly constituted authority. However, we are fortunate in having some details regarding the organization of two companies of volunteers,—one at Lynchburg and the other at Harrisburg.

An undated clipping in my possession from the *Galveston News* contains an account of the organization of the Lynchburg company, and of the making of the first flag in Texas bearing the Lone Star and the word "Independence." It was written by James S. McGahey, an officer of the company, who signed himself "An old Texian and an old Texas Veteran."

HEMPSTEAD, TEXAS, May 30th.

To the News:

At this time viz: September 15, 1835, the writer hereof (a Virginian by birth) was at Captain William Scott's, San Jacinto, assisting in the organization of a company, upon the Captain's proposition. . . .

Wm. Scott (a Kentuckian) was a wealthy man and patriotic to the core. He proposed to equip in full any one who would volunteer to fight for the cause of Texas, giving him a good horse, saddle, bridle, gun, accoutrements, provisions and a suit of clothes, and making his house headquarters until they were ready to march.

About thirty men organized into a company, electing William Scott Captain, Peter J. Duncan of Alabama, first Lieutenant, and James S. McGahey, second Lieutenant. One morning while their preparations were going forward, Scott said to McGahey, "Mack, I have a piece of beautiful silk, solid blue. If you'll make a staff, we'll have a flag." McGahey took the four yards of silk to Lynchburg, where a staff was made, and Mrs. Lynch sewed a piece of domestic to the silk to protect its edge from fraying, where it was attached to the staff. Charles Lanco,<sup>3</sup> a painter by trade, by order of McGahey, painted, in the center, a large five-pointed white star. Having done this, Lanco remarked, "Well now, that looks naked, let me paint something under it. What shall it be?" McGahey replied, "put the word 'Independence,'" and it was done.

<sup>3</sup>It is probable that Charles Lanco here mentioned was one of the men, who a few months afterwards perished in the Alamo. In the roll of names on the Alamo monument at Austin, it is engraved Charles Zanco, and in some early records of these heroes it has been printed Charles Lanco of Denmark, in others, Charles Zanco.

Some men from Eastern Texas on their way to San Felipe, stopped, looked at the flag, admired it, and said, "It is just the course for Texas to take." Passing on to Harrisburg where there was another Volunteer Company, they told them of the Lynchburg flag, and its "Independence motto." Some of the men at Harrisburg denounced the display of this motto, and said "they would shoot any man who attempted to raise a flag with the word Independence on it before it had been officially declared by the proper authorities." An angry message to this effect was sent by courier to the Lynchburg Company, and a reply was returned, inviting the senders of the message to come down the next day and see the flag hoisted.

McGahey had acted without authority in the matter of the motto, and in the message to the Harrisburg Company, but, when Captain Scott was told of it, he said, "By blood, Mack, that was a little rash, but I'll sustain you in it."

The next day about noon, there came down the Bayou, two large yawl boats, each carrying eight armed men, and pulled up to the shore. Captain Scott's company was formed in line, under command of Lieutenant Duncan, between the shore and Mrs. Lynch's house, every man with a loaded gun. "Not a man got out of either boat, nor was there a word spoken by any one." McGahey set his gun against the house, stepped into the house, took the flag from a rack, returned to the center of his company, unfurled the flag, and "planted the staff with a firm stroke in the ground, on the bank of the San Jacinto, and the lone star with the magic word Independence floated proudly on the breeze. For some minutes not a word was spoken; presently the captain of one of the boats ordered his men to push away from the bank, and when out a short distance in the stream stood up, and taking off his hat, flourished it around his head, shouting, "Hurra for the Lone Star." Every man of his crew did likewise, but the other boat pulled away up stream, and departed without any demonstration of any kind whatever.<sup>4</sup>

The action of these two boatloads of men illustrated the feeling of the Texans in general, some full of fearless enthusiasm for

"The clipping comprising the letter of J. S. McGahey bears no year date. It is part of a collection preserved in a scrap book arranged partly in 1870, and at other times up to 1897.

James S. McGahey was born in Virginia, June, 1805. He emigrated to Texas in company with George M. Patrick (1827), and shared in almost every movement of the colonists toward the assertion and maintenance of their rights. The last twenty-five or thirty years of his life was passed in Waller county, where he resided with his family at their home near Hempstead. He died on November 27, 1885. His widow survived him a few years. Their grandson, James Darrow, lives at Houston, and a daughter, Dora, wife of G. W. McCormick, at Frenchtown, Kentucky.

resistance at any cost to the methods of tyrannical government recently adopted by Mexico, others in favor of temporizing and waiting for authoritative action. But, when was a revolutionary movement ever carried successfully forward by regular methods?

McGahey of the Lynchburg Company bore his flag on its staff to San Felipe, thence carried it in a knapsack, until after the battle of Concepción. Having been badly wounded in this engagement he was furloughed and returned home after confiding the flag for safe keeping to Thomas Bell, who had fought by his side.

The Company that was organized at Harrisburg at about the same time as the one at Lynchburg, was commanded by Captain Andrew Robinson, and its first lieutenant was Archelaus<sup>5</sup> Bynum Dodson. Its membership was evidently conservative in sentiment, and the flag which was presented to it was made by the hands of the wife of its first lieutenant, to whom she had been married only a few months. This flag was made of calico, blue, red, and white, of equal sized pieces or squares. The blue was set with a single white star, next came the white, then the red, the pieces being arranged in the manner of the Mexican flag then in use in Texas.<sup>6</sup>

We can imagine the trepidation of the young bride as she made and presented this symbol of liberty to the company of which her husband was first lieutenant, and saw them march away to the west, scarcely daring to hope that they would ever return.

Mr. Dodson, who in 1896 was living at Alice, Texas, sent me a model of the flag as he remembered it, and wrote me that there were no ceremonies attending its presentation, nothing but a statement made by him to the company, that the single star was like Texas, alone in her opposition to the autocratic government that

<sup>5</sup>On the authority of the daughter of Mr. Dodson, now living at Alice, Texas, I have made the correction in the name, which has been sometimes published as *Archelam*.

<sup>6</sup>The flag made by Sarah Rudolph Dodson at Harrisburg is a matter of record in the *Texas Almanac* of 1861, pp. 76-77; Brown's *History of Texas*, II, 538; and the manuscript letters of A. B. Dodson in my possession. My correspondence with Archelaus Bynum Dodson in 1896, in regard to it, gave him an opportunity to correct some misconceptions with regard to the flag. This was done not only in the text of one of his letters written by his daughter, at his dictation, but by a model of the flag made by her through his direction, which placed the single white star in a *blue* field instead of a *red*, as it had been described in early publications. This correction was further emphasized by him in this way: in a newspaper clipping describing the white star in a red field, he had the word *red* crossed out, and *blue* written above it.

had been established in Mexico by Santa Anna. He said the flag was carried by Ensign James Ferguson, second lieutenant, at the head of the company, until Austin superseded John W. Moore at Gonzales<sup>7</sup>

Austin requested that the use of the flag be discontinued, that, if it should be taken into San Antonio, the commander there would look upon it as a revolutionary flag. So, it was not again unfurled, and was lost sight of in the after events of the war. However, after the fall of the Alamo, a flag was found in the fort, which excited the following comment from the Mexican Commander, Santa Anna. In a letter to Secretary of War Tornel, March 6, 1836, he says, "The bearer takes with him one of the flags of the enemy's battalions, captured, which shows that they came from the United States of the North."

We have seen that the two companies organized in Harris County carried flags of original design expressing the political sentiments of their respective membership, and it is equally plain that the naval flag<sup>8</sup> designed by Burnet at a later date strongly symbolized the hope of the Texans, for, how simple and easy would have been the blending of its single star and thirteen stripes into the national standard of the United States. When those hopes were disappointed, and it was afterwards found advisable to contrive another emblem of a design distinctive enough *not* to be readily blended with that of any other nation, it was in Harris County that this emblem was designed and adopted. The coincidence of resemblance between the Harrisburg flag and that finally adopted for the Republic of Texas in colors, differing, as they do in method

<sup>7</sup>Mrs. Dodson died in Grimes county in 1848. She was the daughter of Edwin and Elizabeth Bradley who moved from Kentucky to Texas in 1822 and settled on the Brazos river in Brazoria county. They were among the first of "the old three hundred" of Austin's Colony.

<sup>8</sup>When the provisional government of which he was the head retreated from Washington to Harrisburg, President Burnet and others of his cabinet were at the home of Mrs. Jane Harris, and, while there, Burnet devised the naval flag for Texas, which consisted of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, like the United States flag, with a single white star in a blue field. This flag was adopted by the congress at Columbia in the fall of 1836, and continued in use until the adoption of the national standard by the third congress of the Republic of Texas assembled at Houston December 27, 1838. The flag was approved January 25, 1839.

of arrangement only, is a graceful compliment to Mrs. Dodson, the designer of the Harrisburg flag.

There seems no room for doubt that to Harris County belongs the honor of having raised the first lone star flag in Texas. No rival claims have been established; on the contrary official investigation has disproved all other claims.<sup>9</sup>

Hand in hand with the organization of companies and the making of flags was linked the even more important business of legislating for the impending crisis. That the movements of the Texans were characterized by more than ordinary prudence is manifest when it is remembered that the first deliberative body expressive of deep discontent assembled in 1832, and the principles then enunciated were never lost sight of, yet, the physical manifestation of their revolutionary spirit was held in check until the most patient of patriots could no longer counsel delay.

When we review briefly the events of 1835 and 1836, so full of immediate importance to the people of Texas, and pregnant with the future extension of the limits of the United States, we look back to the first convention as the nucleus round which the people rallied and organized for the defence of their rights. It was indeed a momentous occasion, marked by a long stride and a steady advance in the right direction. The comprehensive character of the resolutions adopted by this body of men, which was in session barely six days, the reports of the several committees and the two spirited memorials addressed to the Congress of the United Mexi-

<sup>9</sup>In reply to the question often asked as to why Texas is called the Lone Star State, Governor C. A. Culberson, on January 29, 1898, wrote a letter which was published in the *San Antonio Express* and the *Houston Post* of January 31 of the same year. The letter deals mostly with the first use of the single star as a seal, and in regard to the flags he writes as follows: "Enterprising and dauntless characters in other states responded to the necessities of the Texans in their struggle for liberty, and among these was a Georgia battalion commanded by William Ward, who with most of his men perished in the massacre of Goliad. The command, as has unquestionably been proven by depositions in our courts, was organized November 12, 1835, at Macon, Ga., and before the 20th of that month, about which day they were at Columbus en route to Texas, Miss Troutman, of Knoxville, Ga., presented these troops with a flag of plain white silk, with a lone azure star of five points, which they afterwards carried as their banner. . . . This, however, was not the first lone star flag unfurled in our war of independence. While the exact date may be in doubt, it is, nevertheless, certain that, prior to the presentation of the flag to Ward in Georgia, Mrs. Sarah R. Dodson, of Harrisburg, Texas, presented a flag of red, white and blue, with a five-pointed white star to a company organized at that place."



can States, all show that its members were of the same temper as those who, three years and five months afterwards, formulated the declaration of Texas independence.<sup>10</sup>

According to the official journal of the first convention held on the first day of October, 1832, in the town of San Felipe de Austin, which was composed of delegates elected by the people of the different districts, the district afterwards known as Harris County was called "San Jacinto," and was represented by Archibald B. Dodson, Geo. F. Richardson, and Robert Wilson.

In the second convention held at the same place, on the first day of April, 1833, David G. Burnet bore a leading part, and his colleagues from this district were Archibald B. Dodson and Geo. F. Richardson. As chairman of a committee to draft a memorial to the Mexican Congress, Burnet prepared a paper which has been pronounced by critics versed in diplomatic literature as deserving high rank among state papers.<sup>11</sup>

It is well known how futile were these well intentioned petitions of the Texas colonists; by the spring of 1835 the anarchy which reigned in the twin state, Coahuila, left the Texans virtually without government except such self-inaugurated local tribunals as they were obliged to establish. The citizens of Harrisburg municipality were even more ready now, if possible, than in former years, to unite with others in insisting upon their rights. The presence among them of the Mexican statesman Zavala (he arrived in July, 1835) inspired them with a sterner determination to combat tyranny by every lawful means. Zavala was active in urging the necessity for organizing a power "which would restore harmony, and establish uniformity in all the branches of the public administration, which would be a rallying point for the citizens, whose hearts now tremble for liberty."<sup>12</sup>

He was an object of suspicion to the government and spies were active in reporting to the Mexican government all of his movements.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Brown, *History of Texas*, I, 196-210.

<sup>11</sup>For a copy of the memorial, see Yoakum, *History of Texas*.

<sup>12</sup>Speech of De Zavala on August 7, 1835, in Foote, *Texas and the Texans*, II, 83.

<sup>13</sup>In a letter written on July 25, 1835, these words are used: "Don Lorenzo de Zavala is now in Columbia trying to arouse the people. Have him called for and he also will be delivered up. Williams, Baker and

From the time of his advent, the people who were his neighbors became his friends, they admired his talent, his patriotism, looked up to him as a guide, and availed themselves of the first opportunity to profit by his services; so, in the sessions of the permanent council which met at San Felipe de Austin from October 11 to October 31, 1835, Harrisburg was represented by Lorenzo de Zavala and Jesse Batterson.<sup>14</sup>

When the consultation elected a general council, which, together with the governor and lieutenant-governor was to be invested with full powers of government, William Plunkett Harris, the brother of John R. Harris, who had founded the town of Harrisburg, represented this municipality.

A law of the Legislature of Coahuila and Texas had provided for the appointment of a first and second judge for each municipality, but none had been appointed. The general council, therefore, on November 16, 1835, appointed two judges for the municipality of Harrisburg.<sup>15</sup> They were T. H. League and Nathaniel Lynch.

The stormy sessions of the general council truly tested the merits of the movement for local self-government, and patriotism often trembled in dread for the outcome. Probably never before did an embryo nation survive such political discord.

Johnson are now on a visit to him, and no doubt conspiring against the government. Fail not to move in this matter quickly, as now is the time." Brown, I, 302-303.

<sup>14</sup>THE QUARTERLY, VII, 260.

<sup>15</sup>On the thirtieth day of December, 1835, the general council passed an ordinance defining the boundary of the municipality of Harrisburg, which was approved by the Governor, Henry Smith. The boundary lines of the municipality of Harrisburg shall be, and hereby are declared as follows: "Beginning at the entrance of Clear Creek into Galveston Bay, running up said creek with the line of the Municipality of Brazoria, and with said line to the Brazos River; thence up said river to the upper line of a league of land granted by the Mexican Government to Isaacs; thence along said line to the Northeast corner of said league; thence northwardly to include the settlements on Spring Creek, to the Southern line of the Municipality of Washington; thence eastwardly along said line to the Municipality of Washington, and so far eastwardly as to intersect the line dividing the department of Brazos and Nacogdoches; thence southwardly along said line to Galveston Bay; thence to the place of beginning."

Section 2 of the ordinance decreed that the town of Harrisburg on the west bank of Buffalo Bayou should be the "Place for transacting the judicial and municipal business of said municipality and for deposit of the archives of the same."

On December 13, the council passed a resolution calling for a convention of delegates from each municipality of the three departments of Texas, to meet on March 1, 1836, to adopt a form of government. This resolution promised to clear the atmosphere, and gave the people hope that a new body of representatives would be able to quiet internal dissensions, and at the same time elect and install a government to cope successfully with the warlike conditions surrounding them. The rapidity with which their wishes were carried out shows that there was remarkable unanimity among the delegates assembled at Washington on the Brazos; a convention which lasted barely seventeen days; and laid the foundation for a nation.

On this occasion the municipality of Harrisburg was represented by Lorenzo de Zavala and Andrew Briscoe. This convention, which made the Declaration of Independence, and adopted a constitution for a provisional government, forming the basis for that of the Republic of Texas, elected David G. Burnet, president, and Lorenzo de Zavala, vice-president, thus giving to these citizens of the municipality of Harrisburg the highest offices within their gift.

These proceedings were the consummation of the most ardent hopes of the leading citizens of Harris County, and the decisive battle of San Jacinto, a few weeks afterward gave to Texas with a single rapid master stroke the sacred boon, which their gifted statesmen had, for years, vainly besought the Mexican government to grant. Yet, between these two important dates, when independence was declared and won, what scenes of terror and desolation had defaced the fair landscape. What generous libations had been poured upon liberty's altars, what sacrificial flames had ascended in her name! The very names "Alamo and La Bahia" spread terror throughout the land.

As the retreat of the Texan army to the eastward left the homes of the west unprotected, flight became the watchword, and the dread cry "the Mexicans are coming" echoed in the ears of the fugitives, as with almost breathless haste they sought to get in advance of the army in order to keep it between them and the dreaded foe. Tales of the "Runaway scrape"<sup>16</sup> have been cleverly

<sup>16</sup>THE QUARTERLY, VI, 162-172; *A Comprehensive History of Texas*, II, 669-671.

told by many who were in it and of it, but attention is specially directed to those relating to Harris County experiences.

President Burnet, Vice-President Zavala and others of the cabinet of the provisional government were members of the household of Mrs. Jane Harris, widow of John R. Harris, from March 22 until about the 13th of April; a few days afterward New Washington became their rendezvous.<sup>17</sup>

The expedition to Harrisburg, under command of Santa Anna himself, for the purpose of capturing the government, and especially the vice-president, Zavala, was a failure so far as its main objects were concerned, but, inasmuch as it resulted in the entire destruction of this then important town, with its steam saw-mill, and the printing press of the *Telegraph and Texas Register*, the newspaper on which the government depended for the publication of its executive orders, it inflicted untold damage on the Texans, and greatly retarded the progress of the infant Republic.<sup>18</sup>

New Washington was the home of Colonel James Morgan, and here President Burnet narrowly escaped capture a few days after

<sup>17</sup>*From Virginia to Texas, 1835-1836*—Diary of Col. Wm. F. Gray, 143, 146, 165.

<sup>18</sup>The *Telegraph and Texas Register* published at San Felipe de Austin by Gail Borden, Jr., Thomas H. Borden and Joseph Baker, under the firm of Baker & Bordens, was moved from San Felipe to Harrisburg, the latter part of March, 1836. In spite of the disturbed condition of the country, an effort was made to resume publication. On April 14, the "forms went to press," but, only a few sheets had been taken off, probably not more than half a dozen, when Santa Anna and his troops entered the town and captured the printers and press. The former were held prisoners, the latter, together with all material, was thrown into the Bayou. The editors made their escape, taking with them the few sheets which had been printed. These were of great importance, for they comprised the executive ordinance of the provisional government, at Harrisburg, the only copy which was preserved in the general destruction of that place, which speedily followed.

Mr. A. C. Gray, in his "History of the Texas Press," says: "The press was what was known as a 'Smith medium hand press,' manufactured by R. Hoe & Co., New York, and was at that time considered the best press made. It was afterwards taken out of the bayou, and set up in Houston, and the 'Morning Star' printed on it. It was in the 'Telegraph' office when that paper finally suspended in February, 1877. What became of it after that time is not known." So much for the newspaper of the Revolution, which published the official documents of the consultation, council and provisional government, up to the time, when it was violently seized and consigned to a watery grave by the minions of Santa Anna. A description of the wrecking of the type was given in an editorial contained in the first number of the second volume of the *Telegraph*, issued January 18, 1837, at Columbia.

leaving Harrisburg; he had just put off from the shore in a small boat when the General, Almonte, at the head of a squad of cavalry, dashed into the place. After pillaging the store houses, the torch was applied to the buildings, when the Mexicans received orders to march as rapidly as possible to Lynchburg hoping to intercept and cut off the passage of the Texan army, which was supposed to be retreating, by way of the ferry at that place.

I have often visited the place during the life-time of Colonel Morgan, and heard the tale of how Turner, an intelligent yellow boy belonging to Colonel Morgan, at first misled the Mexicans, by telling them that General Houston and his army had already crossed the river at Lynchburg on their march to the Trinity; also of how the Mexican pack mules were stampeded in a narrow lane, when their drivers were surprised by orders to prepare for a forced march to Lynchburg.

The battle of San Jacinto, which soon followed this counter-march of the Mexicans, is by far the most important event that ever took place in the county or the state. But, it has been so fully described by abler writers, that it would be out of place in this compendium. There are, however, some circumstances connected with it which may with propriety be mentioned. They were familiar topics of conversation among the old settlers who were living at Harrisburg and its vicinity at the time of the battle, and with whom I was associated very closely during my girlhood.

In close connection with the battle of San Jacinto, though separated from the field by eight long miles, is the noted Vince's Bridge, which has won a place in history altogether out of proportion to the size of the stream, or its strategic importance. This is, no doubt, owing to the ignorance of early writers as to the topography of the country. General Houston in his report of the battle says he "ordered the bridge on the only road communicating with the Brazos, distant eight miles from our encampment, to be destroyed, thus cutting off all possibility of escape"; it was in all probability the only road, for roads were few in those days; the settlers were accustomed to cut across the prairies, directing their course by points of timber, and usually reached their destination with slight variation from the prescribed route. Imaginative writers, entirely ignorant of the size of the stream or the nature of the country near it, have pictured Vince's Bayou as a wide,

turbid, raging torrent, impossible to cross without a bridge, when, in reality, it is only three miles long, and, but for its boggy banks, might easily have been crossed at almost any point.

The direct line of march for the Mexican army from Fort Bend (near Richmond) to the ferry at Lynchburg, would have crossed Sim's Bayou at a point above the source of Vince's Bayou; and it was by this route that the heavy cannon and a portion of Cos's command marched.<sup>20</sup> The deep ruts left by this cannon in the soft prairie soil, which, on account of a very rainy season, was thoroughly saturated, were familiar to people living in this section of the country not only soon after the battle, but for months, and even years afterwards.

The Mexicans who had crossed Vince's Bridge naturally sought to escape by the same route, and the horse on which Santa Anna was mounted, a fine black stallion, which he had taken from the Vince's place on his march from Harrisburg to New Washington, took the road leading to his owner's home. If Santa Anna had been informed as to the "lay of the land" he could have made good his retreat to the Brazos, without ever seeing Vince's Bayou, as did a courier from Colonel Garcia, who reached Filisola on the afternoon of the 23rd of April, 1836.<sup>21</sup>

Well for Texas that there was no traitor to guide him, and that this small, insignificant, boggy little bayou, scarcely noticeable on the map, arrested his flight, and prevented his reaching the division of the Mexican army under Filisola, on the Brazos. Could he have done so, what might have been accomplished by Filisola with his four thousand and seventy-eight trained soldiers against the small Texas army at San Jacinto! The bridge was chopped and burned, so as to be impassable, but the remnants of timber were long to be seen on the bank. When a new one was made, it was placed about a hundred yards higher up the stream, and the one now in use is still farther from the original bridge and nearer the source of the small stream.

Many years ago in company with my grandmother, Mrs. Jane Harris, who was living at Harrisburg during the revolution, I fre-

<sup>20</sup>*Texas Almanac*, 1870, 41-42—Account of the battle of San Jacinto by Col. Pedro Delgado.

<sup>21</sup>*Texas Almanac*, 1859, 59—"The San Jacinto Campaign," by N. D. Labadie.

quently traveled over this road, and had pointed out to me the location of the bridge, which had played such an important part in history.

An error made by the early writers in the names of two bayous which empty into Buffalo Bayou in the vicinity of Harrisburg, has resulted in a misconception of the movements of the Texian army before the battle of San Jacinto. For instance, the name of Bray's Bayou, which empties into Buffalo on its right bank to the north of Harrisburg, seems to have been substituted in Yoakum's History for Sim's Bayou, which lies about two miles south of it, and must have been crossed by Santa Anna, in his march from Harrisburg to New Washington. Bray's Bayou played no part in the march of the Texan army. The Texan army marched along the left bank of Buffalo Bayou to a point opposite Harrisburg, thence to a point just below the mouth of Sim's Bayou, two miles below Harrisburg, where they crossed to the right bank of Buffalo Bayou, using the floor of Mr. Isaac Batterson's house, which was about where Clinton now stands, to make a raft for crossing the troops, the horses being made to swim; thence, their line of march was the same that had been followed by Santa Anna until they neared Lynch's Ferry, where they halted, and where the famous battle took place.

Many refugees were encamped at no great distance, and heard the sound of the cannon, while waiting in great anxiety to learn who were the victors. Some were clustered together on Galveston island, where their temporary shelters of calico, domestic, and sheeting, stretched as awnings over sun-browned women and children, gave them a gypsy-like appearance. Newly arrived volunteers from New Orleans lent an important military air to the environs of little Fort Travis at Galveston. Finally, on April 26, all were summoned to approach the government headquarters when the bearer of dispatches from the army arrived—Benjamin C. Franklin was the messenger of good tidings.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup>It usually strikes the reader of Texas history with surprise, that, while the battle of San Jacinto took place on the afternoon of the twenty-first of April, the news did not reach the government headquarters at Galveston until the morning of the twenty-sixth, four days and a half after the event. A detailed account of the manner in which the news was carried by means of a row boat, was obtained by me from John Iiams, one of the rowers. Judge Franklin bore the dispatches, and

The joyful news of victory was received with a wild outburst of shouts and hurrahs. It was unexpected, for, most gloomy forebodings had marked the weary days of waiting on the island. Mingled with this heartfelt joy, however, was disappointment, that Santa Anna had not fallen by the sword or been riddled with musket balls; or, failing these most suitable means for his ending, how would their joy have been doubled, if following the news of victory had come the announcement of his military execution. The people were crazy with thirst for revenge. The refugee citizens, for the most part, made preparations to return to their homes and make the best of their late losses. But, the feeling among the troops became daily more intense, and President Burnet eventually became the target for their most bitter denunciation. After his removal with the cabinet and the prisoner, Santa Anna, to Velasco, and the conclusion of the treaties between them on May 14th, the violent outbreaks on the part of the troops manifested their unbridled temper, and caused the friends of Burnet to fear for his personal safety. The painful circumstance of the forcible interference of the military (mostly newly arrived volunteers), in preventing the government from carrying out article 10 of the treaty of Velasco, is recorded with reluctance by the historian. The two letters in the note below are of interest in this connection.<sup>23</sup>

Liams was assisted in rowing by two others whose names are not remembered. He said they did not dare to venture out into deep water, but skirted the shore as closely as possible. Not being sufficiently furnished with cooked provisions to make the trip without stopping, and having neither space nor utensils for cooking on board, they had to stop along the shore to cook their scanty meals.

<sup>23</sup>The original of the letter from A. Briscoe was obtained from Mrs. Gertrude Hobby, widow of A. M. Hobby, December 5, 1899. Mrs. Hobby was then living at Ennis, Texas. Burnet's reply is among the papers of A. Briscoe.

"Galveston, Fort Travis, May 19th, 1836

"Dear Sir:—

"Availing myself of the privilege of a friend, I must take the liberty of warning you of the excitement of the people. We have received information here of extraordinary liberty allowed the prisoners under your eye, and knowing the natural benevolence of your character, I do not hesitate to believe it, I may pretend to know better the character of these people of Texas than you can, as well as the motives and principles which actuate the worse part of mankind, which you, having no feeling in common cannot pretend to understand. If Santa Anna is not spared for some evident political advantage, the people will not be satisfied without a trial. If he has not violated the laws of nations by his conduct toward Fannin's Division, he has at least violated the laws of



The difficulties which encompassed President Burnet in preserving his prisoners from violence are well known historical facts, and his supposed leniency was so repugnant to the feelings of the mass of people, that his friends considered his life in jeopardy. It was not until after the election of General Houston in the fall of 1836 that the popular anger had sufficiently abated for reason to assume sway, and Santa Anna was released and allowed to pursue his journey under guard to Mexico, via Washington, D. C.

The summer and fall of 1836 were signalized by an element of unrest almost as great as that of the preceding year when the

this country by a deliberate murder, for which he must be tried, if not spared for some great political advantage.

"You have taken the responsibility of his safe keeping; the people will hold *you* personally responsible, and the world will not afford you a place of concealment if he or any of his suite should under any circumstances escape. This is from one who loves you much, the country more; who has the same feelings of the people, without their exuberance or suspicion; taking the liberty to subscribe myself with the highest respect and esteem.

"Your very Ob's Serv't

"A BRISCOE."

To this President Burnet replied:

"Velasco May 21st, 1836

"My Dear Sir:—

"Your favor of the 19th inst. is just received. It gives me an unfeigned and somewhat *unusual* pleasure to be had in Texas, to recognize in your letter feelings and the sentiments of genuine, unsophisticated friendship. It is a manifestation that is peculiarly gratifying to me at this time. You will, therefore, accept my sincere thanks for it.

"I am not aware that any extraordinary privileges are granted the President, Santa Anna. He and his suite are confined to a small house, which is constantly patrolled by a guard consisting of two soldiers with the usual reliefs. He is treated, I believe, with the respect due his rank and condition. This is in accordance with my views of propriety, and for this I am *willing* to be responsible before the world.

"If he should escape, an event which I do not think at all probable, the *fault* will not be mine, but I *am sensible* the responsibility would, however unjust the imputation would be.

"I have from the beginning strenuously opposed the murdering policy, and so long as I retain a sense of my paramount responsibility to my God, I will continue to do so, though every man in Texas act otherwise. The idea of a judicial trial is too great an absurdity for sensible men to entertain. The Chiefs of belligerent nations have never yet been thought amenable to the Courts of the *enemy* Country, for any of their official acts. A cold blooded massacre, even when it might be justified by a rigid interpretation of the *lex talionis* would elevate either the moral *reputation* or the actual moral feelings of the people of Texas. It would be revolting to every feeling heart throughout the world, and I have yet to learn any one benefit that would result from it. Santa Anna *dead* is no more than Tom, Dick or Harry *dead*, but, living, he may avail *Texas* much.

revolution was brewing.<sup>24</sup> While the battle of San Jacinto brought a temporary feeling of security, there were persistent rumors of preparations for a new invasion: volunteer companies were constantly arriving from the United States, and while they were warmly welcomed on Texas soil, their lack of discipline often promoted disturbances, and delayed the establishment and enforcement of the sorely needed laws. Mexican cruisers in the gulf

"From these brief terms, you may deduce my views. I know the popular jealousies, that men are always ready to impute to others the atrocities which they themselves are capable of, and are slow to believe that others can act from higher and purer motives than influence themselves. Such men are found all the world over, and they are not scarce in Texas. But I hope better things of *others*, and am willing at all times to submit my public and private conduct to their judgment. The future good of Texas is my single object; thus far, I have absolutely neglected all my private interests even to the present *comfort* of my little family to promote that object,—if my efforts fail, the misfortune will be mine, but

A guilty conscience  
I will avoid, Err  
I may, but I do not  
intend to err.

"Finding a brief leisure, it gives me pleasure to write this much to one to whose honor and sincerity I have implicit confidence and who I trust will believe me to be

"His friend and St

"DAVID G. BURNET."

"CAPT. A. BRISCOE,  
"Galveston."

<sup>24</sup>A spirited letter from Col. James Morgan, who was stationed on Galveston Island, and had in charge many of the prisoners captured at San Jacinto, illustrates well the general feeling of insecurity as to probable invasion, and also the undertone of incredulity as to the future of the new town of Houston, which then existed only on paper.

"Galveston, Sept. 30, 1836

"Dear Sir:—

"Since the receipt of yours of the 8th, if I have had an opportunity of answering it, I have not been aware of it. I have had nothing important to communicate. The account you gave of the election did somewhat surprise me. Hurrah! for Capt. Bob! There can be no doubt of General Houston's election to the presidency, and less of General Lamar's to the Vice presidency.

"You have no doubt heard how the election went on the Brazos. I have just returned from Velasco. The Flash was there and has nothing for you. She will be here today, is now in sight with a fair wind, which has been ahead a day or two.

"I presume your correspondent in N. O. did not send what you ordered in consequence of her advertising for Velasco, though she has brought articles for Gov. Zavala. The Kos will probably bring yours; she will be here without doubt in ten days.

"The Independence, Com. Hawkins, arrived at Velsaco, just before I got there. He was chased on the coast of Mexico for 10 or 12 hours by

gave chase to the poorly equipped vessels of the Texas navy, and the people of the coast country were kept in dread of war from without, and internal commotion by the discontented Texas army.

armed Mexican brigs and one schooner, but made his escape. He learned their names on the coast. In all they carry 27 guns. He was informed off Matamoras that 4000 Mexicans were on the march for Texas, 2000 of which were cavalry: Carnes and Teal have escaped and are at headquarters of the Army. They bring news of more troops raised in Mexico for this country, headed by General Bravo and Valencio.

"We shall have warm work yet. I am glad to hear of the brisk trade you have and that the health of the country is getting better: I have my doubts whether the Colonel will ever be able to get his mill agoing, notwithstanding his industry and perseverance.

"I had heard of the high times at Harrisburg. The new town of Houston cuts a considerable swell in the paper. I wish its projectors and proprietors success with all my heart. It will injure Harrisburg City greatly when it gets into successful operation. Property must begin to depreciate there already. As for New Washington and Lynchburg, Scotisburg and all the other burgs, not forgetting Powhatan, all must go down now. Houstonburg must go ahead in the *newspaper at least*.

"I have had on the Island the secret agent of the United States. Next Congress will not attach us to the Union, I think. A spy has been on the Island likewise—A letter from him to General Urrea has been intercepted at New Orleans. I expect soon to go to the United States. Have you any commands?

"Truly and Respectfully yrs

"J. MORGAN."

"CAPT. A. BRISCOE."